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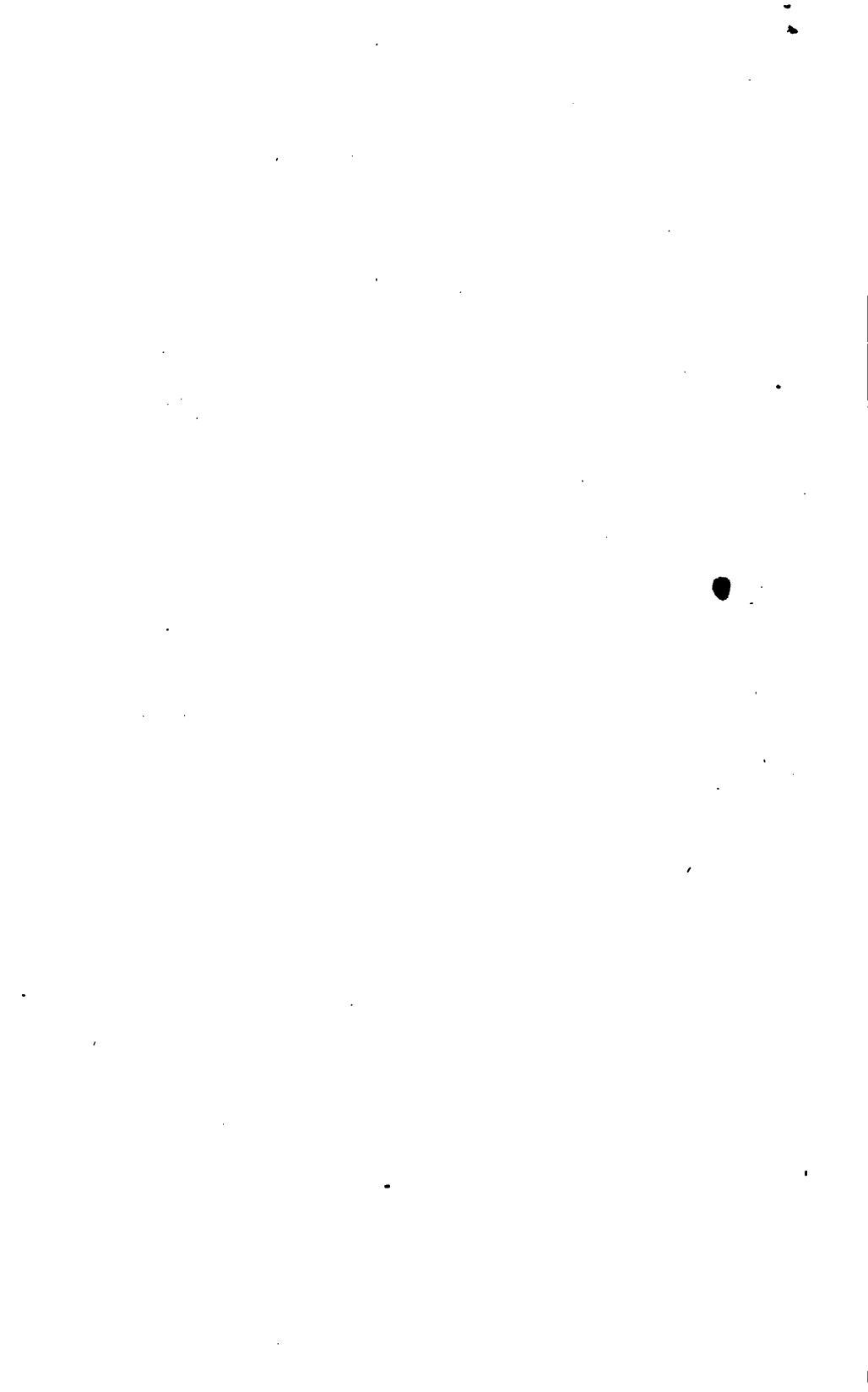
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GENTLEMEN,

From 1859 to 1865, I had the honour to hold the office of Rector in the University of Edinburgh; and to take part in the Government of that University as the presiding member of its Court, and otherwise. Upon agreeing that my name should be submitted to you for the corresponding office in 1877, I stated my inability to engage myself for the performance of any active duty whatever, including in this renunciation the time-honoured function, which has been exalted by the willing efforts of so many distinguished men; the function of delivering a Rectorial Address to the Students of the University. In so stipulating, I was not governed by any disposition to undervalue the honour solicited on my behalf, or the dignity of this ancient and noble institution: but I had in view partly my increased and increasing years, partly the fact that I had already travelled over the field of such topics

as had occurred to me in connection with such an occasion and such a duty. It was in truth a high and not a low estimate of the office, then in prospect and since conferred, which led me to guard myself by this reservation ; for I was unwilling to run the risk of being obliged to offer you the mere leavings of an exhausted store, or the commonplaces of that routine, which cannot always be shut out even from Academical precincts, or thoughts, or language.

In truth, I find it more easy to offer you my reasons for having eschewed the performance of this particular duty, than to vindicate my now undertaking to discharge it. In this respect, after what I have said, I must be content rather to excuse than to justify myself. I excuse myself mainly by saying that I have perceived among you signs of a strong attachment to the established custom of an Address from your Lord Rector, such as I am unwilling to disappoint. And as the stars seem to multiply after a prolonged and earnest gaze, so I must upon reflection admit, that the field of topics, appropriate to your condition and prospects, continually gathers new elements of fertility from the movement and tendencies of the time, as the well-ploughed soil progressively acquires them from the passing breeze. I will only then invoke your indulgence, in case the matter of my Address should suggest, or prove, that I had better have adhered to my first intention.

In some respects, Gentlemen, your position, and

that of the sister establishments in Scotland, is more normal than that of two larger, and yet more ancient and powerful, Universities of England. Of the governing and teaching bodies, as known to you on this side the Border, we can say with truth what we cannot as yet say with universal truth of Oxford and of Cambridge, that their members are, every one of them, working bees. Of your modest endowments you may boast, what is still to a limited extent open to question in the South, that they are without exception applied, rationally and directly, to the promotion of true academic purposes. You have also a great advantage in this, that among your students there is hardly a sprinkling, or at all events there is a very much thinner sprinkling of youths, who, unhappily for themselves and for others, arrive at an University without any adequate sense of its mission, or of their own. Such youths contemplate it as a pleasant lounge subject to the drawback of lessons of routine, which it is their chief care to keep down to a *minimum*: or accept it as a condition of their social standing, or as a promotion from their school-life; or turn it physically to account as an arena for corporal exercises, without any higher care. The rapid growth of wealth in the country tends to enlarge the numbers of these pseudo-students in the English Universities; but it is the aim of reform, and the constant care of the authorities, if they cannot be exterminated, to keep them down. Among

you, Gentlemen, I trust that these anomalous varieties of the academic sub-kingdom of the human species are scarcely known. May they long be strangers to your precincts. For they foreshadow in youth, and they feed in after life that heavy mass of idlers, among our wealthy men, who, though not reckoned statistically among our dangerous classes, yet are in truth a class both mischievous and dangerous to the intellectual and moral vigour of society, and, even in a more direct manner, to the institutions of the country. . Oxford and Cambridge have a noble office, and, in its own way, an unrivalled position : but the Scottish Universities have also their own proper and admirable work. To them it is given, far more than elsewhere, to draw forth freely from that grand and inexhaustible repository, the mass of the people, the human material capable of being moulded into excellence ; and to earn in the most honourable of all modes the title of national by securing most and best the needs of the nation at large. And I rejoice to know, Gentlemen, that, if this title has been legitimately won in other days you are not likely to lose it now. While the population of your country is fast growing, the population, so to speak, of your Universities is growing faster still. I find that the Students of Glasgow, who in 1861 were eleven hundred and forty, had grown, in the last annual Session, to be two thousand and ninety-six. Nor will you observe with envy, for

there can be no envy in the fair sisterhood of Universities, that Edinburgh exhibits an increase no way less remarkable, and that her Students have risen, within the same sixteen years, from fourteen hundred and sixty-two to twenty-five hundred and ninety-one. In all, it would appear that Scotland, with her population of three millions and a half, has, for her four Universities, more than five thousand five hundred students. A noble testimony this, Gentlemen, to the wisdom of the Act of 1858; to the careful government and efficient instruction of your able, and I must add indefatigable, Principals and Professors; and, not least, to the unexhausted appetite of the Scottish people for the benefits which the Universities confer.

Through the kindness, however, of your Principal and your Professor of Humanity, seconded by the intelligent willingness of his Students, I have been allowed the privilege of a nearer insight into the structure of your Academic society. It is with the deepest interest and pleasure that I place upon record the main heads of knowledge thus attained. Of 647 Students in the Humanity Class, information has actually been obtained as follows from no less than 590. Of these, 229 are studying with a view to the Ministry: 106 to the Profession of Teachers: 110 for the Law: no more than 38 for Medicine are in the Humanity Class: 23 for various branches of business: and 74 are as yet undetermined. Of these I am

informed it is probable that a large proportion will enter on some one of the walks of commercial life.

Still more interesting, than this exhibition of the connection between the greatest among the professions and the pursuit of general culture, is the view, I will say the deeply touching view of the amount of resolute unsparing personal effort and sacrifice, through which alone it is that the youth of Scotland come so extensively to the benefits of Academic training. These are not the children of wealth and ease, grudging whatever is given to study as stolen from luxury and amusement. They are the hardy offspring of a hardy land, who win by toiling the privilege of further toil, and in thus cumulating effort give a doubled strength to the fibre of their faculties and their will.

Of the 590 Students, who may be taken, I understand, fairly to represent the average of the University, about one-third, or more exactly 199, are so far independent in their means, that they are not diverted from their Academic work by any other occupation. But there are no less than 391, or two-thirds of the whole, who keep their place in the University, absolutely or almost in every case, by one form or another of private employment added on through the whole, or a portion, of the year, to the burden of their studies. Two hundred and forty are thus engaged in extraneous work, both during the

Session and through the Summer. One hundred and thirty-five, without doubling their task during the Session, are variously employed through the Summer. The remaining sixteen join a business to their Academic pursuits in the Winter. The intending lawyers are Clerks in Writers' offices: the teachers to-be, and others, are employed in teaching, and some as pupils in the Training Colleges. Some youths are exercised in Mission-work. 'The remainder,' says Professor Ramsay, 'are distributed over every conceivable kind of employment. In the Humanity Class this year are included joiners, miners, brass-founders, boot-makers, tailors, grocers, engineers, ship-builders, drapers, stewards of steamers, a toll-keeper'—who may I suppose well be said to levy toll first of all upon himself—'a pocketbook-maker, a blacksmith;' with others.

Of this statement, Gentlemen, I will only say that I do not know, and hardly can conceive, one more full of promise for the future of your country. These facts and figures, Gentlemen, present to us more than an interesting fragment of statistics, more than a case of legislative success and wise and prosperous administration. They supply a sign, and one among the most interesting signs, bearing upon the relation between the special wants of the age, and the present extent and efficacy of the provision for meeting them. For the wants of this age are indeed very special, and very urgent. It is a time of rapid progress; and



rapid progress is in itself a good. But, when the velocity is great, then, as in the physical so in the moral world, the conditions of equilibrium are more severe, and the consequences of losing it are more disastrous.

The changes, that have taken place among us within the compass of a generation, as to the external and material conditions of life, have been far greater changes, than, at any previous period of recorded history, have been crowded into a similar space of time. Capital and Industry, if they could be regarded as impersonated in living spirits, and in living spirits, too, which had gone to sleep fifty years back, and were now suddenly awakened, would be at a loss to identify the world they remembered with the world they found. At the commencement of that period, the laws which were mis-called Protective, and which were really laws for the promotion of scarcity, and the prevention of abundance, had so completely attained their purpose that, notwithstanding the growth of population and of mechanical invention, notwithstanding a few initial efforts of enlightened statesmen, never to be sufficiently commended, the exchanges of British produce with the produce of all other countries remained at the point, where it had stood at the commencement of the century. At the close of the period, the commerce of the country was multiplied fivefold. Our shipping, which, at the close of the War in 1815, had amounted

to two and a half million tons, and which, by dint of 'protective' fostering, stood at the same figure in 1830, had in 1878 passed six and a half million of tons, navigated at a much smaller expense per ton, and also, through the agency of steam, performing relatively to tonnage from twice to three times the amount of work. Goods, which had been used to travel from place to place at two miles an hour, now principally go at twenty. Persons, who travelled at four, six, or ten, now, at one-third or one-fourth the cost, accomplish four times the speed. Private correspondence had been a luxury forbidden to the less wealthy classes: for a letter from Edinburgh to London paid (I think) fifteen pence half-penny for each separate piece of paper it contained, while it now passes in a fourth part of the time for a penny or a half-penny. Messages, while I speak, are passing with the speed of lightning along a thousand wires: and further we are cheered or threatened, as according to our several temperaments the case may be regarded, with inventions of which the joint effect seems likely to be that everybody will speak to everybody at all times, in and to all places, and upon all subjects. Materials and instruments of production, which Nature had furnished grudgingly in crude forms, or from a distance are now produced at will by Art, in quantities only limited by demand. But it would be vain to attempt a complete enumeration of the changes which, often it must be sorrowfully confessed in deforming the fair face of

Creation, have, during this wonderful period, passed upon our industry and trade. I will only sum up the results by stating, from an able paper by Mr. Giffen\* of the Statistical Department, that the annual Income, taxable to Income Tax, which was 130 millions in 1813, was 571 millions in 1874-5 : that the annual increment of personal property, without allowing for capital laid out upon the soil, is 150 millions : that the amount added in a decade is greater than the entire amount of personal property in 1814 : and that, if there had not been any property at all in the country fifty years back, if we had then started from zero, and could have created it at the rate at which we are now creating it, nearly the whole of what we now possess would by this time have been accumulated in that brief term of years.

A review, even upon paper, of these enormous changes seems to make the head giddy ; and suggests the need of knowing something of their actual and probable effect upon the entire, and especially upon the higher, destinies of man. And this the more gravely, because there is not the least reason to suppose that we have reached, or have even approached, the close of this great epoch of industrial and material development.

It has been owing, Gentlemen, to two great causes. The first of them has been the removal of fetters from human thought and human action, by the re-

\* Recent Accumulations. Statistical Society, Jan. 15, 1878.

peal of unwise laws, which hampered and restrained at every point the interchange among men both of mental and material products. By this partial isolation, the benefit of union in civil society was proportionally dwarfed. The other has been the progress of the natural sciences, and of the inventive arts. The first of these causes is negative: it is, speaking generally, not the doing of good so much as the undoing of mischief; and it has among other effects provided enormous scope and field for the positive action of the second cause. At this moment it can hardly be said to be in enlarging operation: for, while its work in this country has very nearly been accomplished, the rest of the world is tending, for the time, to retrogression rather than to advance. When this folly shall have passed away, there will remain in other lands a great work to be done, a golden harvest to be reaped. To the operation of the second cause, whether here or elsewhere, it seems hard to set any limit whatever. Let us now, therefore, attempt a more general survey from a somewhat higher point of view.

The great salient feature of the age is in its first aspect the constant discovery of the secrets of Nature, and the progressive subjugation of her forces, to the purposes and will of man. This, however, is a view taken from the material side. If we plant ourselves at an elevation sufficient to command the prospects of the moral world, we then perceive that, as in war

so in peace, the victor often succumbs inwardly to the vanquished. So Rome to Greece :

*Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit.\**

So Hercules was reproached by Orjanira :

*Victorem victæ succubuisse queror.†*

These conquests over Nature have enormously multiplied the means of enjoyment. Had that multiplication been so distributed as, either wholly or principally, to sweeten the cup of those, for whom this life is habitually a life of care, and labour, and daily pressure in a thousand forms, it might have seemed rather to redress a painful inequality, than to create an excess, or threaten a disturbance. We may contemplate with unmixed satisfaction that rise of wages, and that increased command of the necessaries and conveniences of life for the many, which has marked our time. But this has not been the only, perhaps not the principal result of the conquests I have described. If they have done much for Industry, they have done more for Capital : if much for Labour, more for luxury. They have enormously extended the numbers, they have I believe extended even the relative numbers, of the leisured and wealthy classes : they have variously and vastly multiplied the incitements to gain, the avenues of excitement, the solicitations to pleasure, among those for whom all these had been, at the very least, sufficient, in the

\* Her. II. Ep. 1. 156.

† Ov. Her. Ep. ix. 2.

more quiet and stationary times that came before. These tendencies to excess, these activities beyond the mean, have acted upon the classes that mainly govern public affairs, and what is more, that mainly form and propagate the current opinion of the day. Among them, the pursuit of material enjoyment, and of wealth as the means of it, has made a progress wholly out of proportion to any advancement they may have effected during the last quarter of a century in mental resources or pursuits. Disproportioned growth, if large in degree, is in the physical world deformity: in the moral and social world, it is derangement that answers to deformity, and partakes of its nature.

Among the signs of this derangement has been the growth of a new class: a class unknown to the past, and one whose existence the future will have cause to deplore. It is the class of hybrid or bastard men of business: men of family, men of rank, men of title, men gallant by courtesy and perhaps by nature, country gentlemen, members of both Houses of Parliament, members of various professions, generally alike in being unsuited for apprenticeship to commercial enterprise. It is made up from the scattered and less considerate members of all classes. The bond that unites them is the bond of gain; not the legitimate produce of toil by hand or brain; in most cases, not fenced off from rashness, as in former times, by liability to ruinous loss in the event of

failure, but to be had without the conditions which alone make pecuniary profits truly honourable. It may be said that, in giving their names to speculations, which they neither understand nor examine, as Directors or Trustees or in other like responsible positions, these spurious representatives of British enterprise give the best of what they have. They contrive not to see that this is simply true, that they are merely wanted as decoys to allure the unwary, and entrap them into the subscription list. For it is a serious truth that there is a proportion of the great and free people inhabiting these islands, who are ever ready to accept merely decorative names as guarantees for the soundness of a project, without the presence or the presumption of knowledge, or skill, or judgment, or proved and hardy integrity.\* I do not enter into the question whether and how this social and economic nuisance, with all the loss, discredit, and demoralisation it entails, may be abated : but I note its existence as a salient proof that we live in a time when, among the objects offered to the desire of a man, wealth, and the direct accompaniments and fruits of wealth, have of late years augmented their always dangerous preponderance.

\* I hope there is nothing in this passage which can be supposed to refer to those persons of position, who betake themselves to real labour in commercial enterprise, or in professions where their appearance is a novelty, whether it be to improve their means of livelihood or otherwise. Such persons appear to me to render good service to the community, and to be worthy of praise, not of censure.

In all times, and all places, and at all stages of its existence, it is the office of the University as such to embody a protest, and to work a comprehensive and powerful machinery, in rebuke and in abatement of this preponderance. In all times, ancient, mediæval, modern. In all places: in Athens and Alexandria, in the Padua and Bologna, the Paris and Oxford of the middle ages, and in the German, Scottish, English, and all other Universities of to-day. In all stages of their existence: for the ancients do not seem to have had more than the rudiment of an University, which it was reserved for the Christian period to bring up to its full maturity and development. It is not from this Academic source, this sacred fountain of the Muses, that the age has derived its tendencies to excess in money-making pursuits and in material enjoyment. This is the home of hard labour, and of modest emolument. Here undoubtedly it is that many a Scottish youth obtains the means of advancement in life: but the improvement in his condition, to which they lead him, flows from the improvement of his mind, from the exercise and expansion of his power to perceive and to reflect, from the formation of habits of attention and application, from a bias given to character in favour of cultivating intelligence for its own sake, as well as for the sake of the direct advantages it brings. These advantages lie in the far future, and do not administer to the feverish excitement which are of necessity, in



various degrees, incidental to the pursuits of the modern commercial world. The habits of mind, formed by Universities, are founded in sobriety and tranquillity. They help to settle the spirit of a man firmly upon its centre of gravity. They tend to self-command, self-government, and that genuine self-respect, which has in it nothing of self-worship; for it is the reverence that each man ought to feel for the nature that God has given him, and for the laws of that nature. It is one thing to plough and sow with the expectation of the harvest in due season, when the year shall have come round: it is another to ransack the ground in a gold field, with the heated hope and craving for vast returns to-morrow or to-day. All honour, then, to the University; because while it prepares young men, in the most useful manner, for the practical purposes of life, it embodies a protest against the excessive dominion of wordly appetites and supplies a powerful agency for neutralising the specific dangers of this age.

How then, Gentlemen studying at Glasgow, how are you best to turn to account your opportunities? Many of you are preparing yourselves with defined intention for one or other of the three great professions best known to our fathers, I mean medicine, the law, and the ministry of religion. Others have other views already fixed, or have not yet fixed their views. But let me say a few words on these.

The medical and legal professions are not likely to

be displaced or menaced by any of the mutations of this or a future century. The demand for their services lies deep, if not in the order of nature, yet in the actual constitution of things; as the one is founded upon discussion, and the other on disease. Nay, this demand is likely to be a growing demand; for, with material and economic progress, the relations of property become more complex and diversified: and as the pressure and unrest of life increase with the accelerated movement of mind and body, the nervous system, which connects them, acquires greater intensity; and new susceptibilities of disorder and suffering, giving occasion for new problems and new methods of treatment, are continually developed.

As the god Terminus was an early symbol of the first form of property, so the word law is the venerable emblem of the union of mankind in civil society. Its personal agents are hardly less important to the general welfare, than its prescriptions: for neither statute, nor parliament, nor press is more essential to liberty than an absolutely free-spoken bar. Considered as a mental training, the profession of the law is probably in its kind the most perfect and thorough of all professions. For this very reason perhaps, it has something like an intellectual mannerism of its own, and admits of being tempered with advantage by other pursuits lying beyond its own precinct, as well as by large intercourse with

the world: by studies not only such as those of Art and Poetry, which have Beauty for their object, but such as history, which opens the whole field of human motive as well as act; which is not tied in the same degree to position and immediate issues; and which, introducing wider laws of evidence, gives far more scope for suspense of judgment, or, in other words, for more exact conformity, or more close approximation between the mind, and the truth, which is in all things its proper object.

We all appreciate that atmosphere of freedom which within the legal precinct is constantly diffused by a healthy competition. The non-legal world indeed is sometimes sceptical as to limitations which prevail within the profession itself. It is sometimes inclined to think (as to England, at least) that, of all professions, its action is in these modern times most shrouded in a technicality and a mystery, which seriously encumber the transaction of affairs, and in some cases tend to exclude especially the less wealthy classes from the benefits, which it is the glory of law to secure for civilised man in the easy establishment and full security of rights. But these are questions which in more tranquil times will find their own adjustment: and while I have hinted to youths intending to follow this noble profession the expediency of tempering it with collateral studies, I congratulate them on the solidity of the position they are to hold. No change practical or speculative, social or political

or economic, has any terrors for the profession of the law.

The medical profession offers at the present time, even to the uninstructed eye, an object of yet livelier interest. Here indeed much is changing : but all in the direction of advance. The dominant activity of the age, addressed to conquests over nature, continually enlarges the knowledge, and the apparatus, lying at the command of the physician and the surgeon. There was a time, when the writer of *Gil Blas* could represent his hero, who had been taken ill in an insignificant country town, as having easily and rapidly recovered, because by good fortune there was no doctor in the place. Such a jest as this, such a weapon, if any novelist could now think of using it, would slay nothing but his own reputation. The medical art is now universally recognised as having learned much for the benefit of mankind, and as honestly and resolutely set on learning more. While becoming more learned, it has also grown more intelligible : for the physician, falling back more and more on the duty of interpreting and assisting nature, more and more (so far as I know) assumes a ground common to him and to his patient, and obtains an obedience more and more intelligent, sympathetic, and effectual. It is no wonder if, simultaneously with all this, the social standing of the profession has come to be more worthy of its character and object : and that equality

with the other cultivated or leisured classes, which was only granted, a century and a half or two centuries ago, to the chiefs of the profession, and that in one only of its branches,\* may now be said to be in the enjoyment of its members generally, and as of right. It is not however only on the physical side, that the great medical profession, for which Glasgow is rearing five hundred, and the sister University of Edinburgh over twelve hundred students, has gained and is gaining ground. The constantly growing complexity of life appears to bring with it a constantly growing complexity of disease. The pace, at which we live, is quickened. The demands both on thought and on emotion are heightened, without any corresponding increase of natural force in the organs or faculties which are to meet these demands. While the mind, asks so much more of the frail flesh, its halting partner, and when so many infirm lives are through skill preserved, which would formerly have lapsed into an early grave, immense as is the advantage on the other side of a more widely diffused sufficiency of food, it has I believe been matter of argument whether on the whole the physical structure of our race is in a course of improvement or of decline.

\* Sir James Paget, in his admirable Lecture delivered last year at the Hunterian Museum, gave to his audience this, with much other, information, that the surgical branch of the profession only attained to an equality in standing with the medical branch in the time of John Hunter, and in a great measure through his character and work.

But, however that may be, it can hardly be matter of doubt, that the enhancement of interaction between the body and the mind both enlarges and elevates the province of the medical man; brings him more and more into the inner sanctuary of our nature; quickens the search for expedients by which he may even

‘Minister to a mind diseased’;

and gives to his art more and more frequently the character of a joint process, operative on the seen and the unseen parts of our compound nature. If this be so, Medicine must more and more come to be not an Art only, but also a Philosophy; and, in this nursery of its future sages, I give hearty utterance to the wish that the medical students of your University may render themselves worthy of the growing influence, and widened scope, of their profession, not alone by their technical accomplishments, but by the strength of their characters and the elevation of their aims.

I turn, Gentlemen, to the case of another great profession.

Still availing myself of the information which has been supplied to me by the Principal and by Professor Ramsay, I estimate that more than an eighth part of the Students of Glasgow, and possibly even a larger proportion of the aggregate numbers in the four Scottish Universities, are preparing themselves for the Christian Ministry. The total number of this

section may perhaps be taken at seven hundred: intended to supply recruits for a body which in Scotland consists of between three and four thousand, and which has also missionary ramifications abroad.

The University of Glasgow is, I believe, strictly a Christian University. It is no part of my business, in this place, to take account of differences, which lie within the compass of that venerable and imperishable name. But it is, I think, in every way appropriate to an occasion, when we are considering the great interests and purposes of the institution, to have some regard to that which is the highest interest and purpose of them all, and to include this profession in my cursory review.

I am glad, then, to infer with confidence, from the figures that have been before me, that in Scotland there is no lack of youths, who take the business of a Christian Ministry for their vocation in life. This is not so in all lands at the present time. In two great countries, namely Germany and France, there is a great decline of the body of young men candidates for ordination, in numbers, or in intellectual standard, or in both. I do not speak exclusively of any one communion, but I refer to both Roman and Protestant. The latest intimation I have seen has regard to Holland; and in that country I find, on what appears to be excellent authority, that one-seventh of the Protestant cures are vacant. There

were, some time back, similar apprehensions on this score in England, at least in the Established Church of England, amidst the desolating convulsions which it has undergone; but I think they have passed away, or, at the least, have diminished. There are, however, traces of a latent feeling, there and elsewhere, that divine interests are secondary or unreal, in comparison with those of the visible and experimental world; or that the difficulties belonging to subjects of religion are such, that to handle them effectually, and with a sound conscience, is hopeless.

Gentlemen, at my years, as one who has seen much of the age both in its practical and in its speculative contentions, I am desirous to bear my testimony, in the face of this young assembly, full of the 'promise and potency' of the future, on behalf of the intellectual dignity of the Christian Ministry. No doubt it is a time of trial: this is the very feature, by which that dignity is most enhanced. No doubt it is a time, when you have not only to contend against assailants from without, respectable alike by talent and researches, and on the yet higher ground of character, but have also to discharge the still more arduous duty of humbly but steadily reconsidering, from within, the forms of the great Christian tradition, in which you have respectively been bred. It is a time in which we all have many things to learn, and some things to unlearn. All this means difficulty, toil, misgiving; the hesita-



tion of many, the falling away of some. But depend upon it, Gentlemen, those who boast, or think, that the intellectual battle against Christianity has been fought and won, are reckoning without their host. If it had, then I, for one, should be disposed to agree with them in the further proposition, that no permanent reliance could be placed upon the multitude of uninstructed numerical adhesions, or upon mere integrity of institutions, and unbroken continuity of rite. Thought is the citadel. But, in my belief, human thought is not yet divorced either from the vital essence of Christianity, or from the cardinal facts and truths which are to that essence as the body to the soul: and, if and when that divorce arrives, with it will come the commencement and the pledge of radical decay in the civilisation of the world. Christianity, Gentlemen, even in its sadly imperfect development is, as matter of fact, at the head of the world: as the first existing power it rules the world: and of all the more or less noisy pretenders who, as if it were an Ottoman despotism, are prematurely disputing for the succession, there is not one which has yet given evidence, either of being capable, or of being accepted, for the place that has so long been held by the Christian scheme.

The work, indeed, of defence, under the conditions to which I have referred, is truly a grave one; for it involves something of what is called, in common contentions, a change of front in face of the enemy.

But as the difficulties, so the aids and the resources, are more than meet the eye. A deliberate survey of the field convinces me that at no time have richer and more fruitful opportunities been offered to the best minds among us for the investigation and the maintenance of truth, in that transcendant region, which determines the relation between this material life and the unseen, between this transitory life and the imperishable.

I am tempted, Gentlemen, further to offer you, with a daring which I hope may be thought excusable, a general observation on the frame of mind in which we all, and most of all those specially engaged, should meet that conflict, or contact, with opposing forces, which in this day no thoughtfully educated man can hope wholly to escape. No defence is to be found in timidity; but much defence is to be found in circumspection. What we have most to complain of is a precipitate rapidity of question, trial, and summary condemnation, which is perhaps as far removed from reason, as is the grossest of the superstitions it condemns. There is a kind of steeple-chase philosophy in vogue. Sometimes it is, that specialism assumes the honours of universal knowledge, and makes short cuts to its conclusions. Sometimes it is, that knowledge of external nature is, by one of the strangest of solecisms, thought to convey a supreme capacity for judging questions which belong entirely to the sphere of moral action, and of moral needs.

All this suggests that abnormal causes are in some degree at work : that besides research, and the great modern art of literary criticism, and an useful reaction against usurping traditions, there is, so to speak, something of an epidemic in the air. We have need to examine, whether there does not creep about among us a predisposition to disturb, a preference for negation, and something of a mental levity, which are more or less included in the term scepticism : a temper to be discouraged ; a frame of mind broadly distinguished from what Dante has sanctioned,\* and Tennyson has called ' honest doubt ' : as well as from a hearty allegiance to Truth, and a determination, so to speak, even to hate father and mother for its sake.

If this be so, what I would suggest, Gentlemen, is, in a manner, to meet scepticism with scepticism ; a wanton scepticism with a scepticism more legitimate. Put it on its trial : allow none of its assumptions : compel it to explain its *formulae* ; do not let it move a step except with proof in its hand ; bring it front to

\* In one of his most profound passages, *Paradiso*, iv. 124-132 :

'Io veggio ben che giammai non si sazia  
Nostro intelletto, se 'l ver non lo illustra,  
Di fuor dal qual nessun vero si spazia.  
Posasi in esso come fera in lustra,  
Tosto che giunto l' ha : e giunger puollo ;  
Se non, ciascun disio sarebbe frustra.  
Nasce per quello, a guisa di rampollo,  
Appiè del vero il dubbio ; ed è natura,  
Ch' al sommo pinga noi di collo in collo.'

Doubt is for Dante a natural and legitimate incident in the course of the pursuit of truth, and is among the instruments provided for helping us to attain it.

front with history ; even demand that it shall show the positive elements, with which it proposes to replace the mainstays it seems bent on withdrawing from the fabric of modern society. When it alleges that our advanced morality (such as it is) is really the work not of Christianity but of civilisation, require it to show cause why this advanced morality has never grown up except under the *Ægis* of the Gospel ; why the old civilisations were one and all smitten with decay, and why they degenerated in moral tissue even before they lost their intellectual vigour. When you are assured that marriage and the laws of purity are safe, ask how it was that the Ancients, in these capital respects, marched continually downwards, and that only in Christian times and lands have these laws come to and maintained authority ? If we are told that morality does not require the artificial supports of belief in God and in a future life, since it can be shown to be founded in the dictates of our nature, may we not reasonably inquire, whether it is indeed now endowed with strength in such superabundance, that it can afford to part with the most operative portion, or with any portion whatever, of its supports ? If we are taught that it is vain to think of knowing God, since such a conception is beyond our grasp, inquire of the teachers how much there is of our knowledge which is more than an account of probabilities, or a contact with isolated parts and mere exteriors ; and whether,

if we will accept nothing as knowledge but what is absolute and perfect knowledge we shall not bring the catalogue of what we know dangerously near to zero?

Again it is urged, with great plausibility, that a religion built upon, or expressed in, a book, or creed, or *formula* of written doctrine, cannot be a permanent religion, since all the forms of human language must vary with the advancing thought of man. I think we may ask in reply whether this is not by far too large a generalisation? No doubt there are branches of knowledge which have undergone and may undergo total revolution. But there are others, which do not; and among these are the great constitutive elements of the moral law. Nor can it be shown that the very phrases, in which moral and religious wisdom found its highest expression thousands of years ago, have ceased to fit the thoughts which they were chosen to convey. Our inheritance from former times would be but meagre, if our condition were such that, at every point, before we could reasonably act upon the substance, we must recast or retry the form. No doubt, there is much in our thought, and more in our language, which like the butterfly is 'born to flutter and decay.' But that no part even of our applied speech is permanently adequate to our prospective needs, has yet to be shown. Proverbs do not grow old, but seem as a rule to keep their freshness. Without touching the domain of

Scripture, I take leave to say, that the oldest of the Creeds and Hymns of Christendom have lost no part of their hold upon the Christian mind and heart, as to the forms of their expression; and are rarely if ever challenged except by those, whose objection is not limited to the form, but pierces into the substance.

In this rapid and slight enumeration, I purposely have avoided other important *formulæ* of what, in a phrase of the sixteenth century, I may call "the new learning." They are those which belong to the domain of external nature: and I have no acquaintance with that domain which would warrant my touching upon it before this assembly. Earlier in this Address I spoke, Gentlemen, of the great conflict between material and mental interests, which marks our time. I have now made bold to touch upon the twin controversy, which it has for a second distinguishing characteristic; that great controversy of belief; as to which there are those who think that the present assault, far from being destined to a final triumph, is in large measure a sign of a mental movement unsteady through an unwonted rapidity, but destined perhaps, in the wise counsels of Providence, to elevate and strengthen, by severely testing processes, the religion which it seeks to overthrow.

In the mean time I would commend to you, as guides in this controversy, truth, charity, diligence, and reverence; which indeed may be called the four

cardinal virtues of all controversies, be they what they may.

In dealing with professions, Gentlemen, I have not particularly referred to the new profession, as it may well be called, of the Teacher. In other times, our fathers were content to leave this important office, like some other great social functions, to be learned not by apprenticeship or theory, but by practice. In the results of the old method, there was much imperfection, and I am afraid no small brutality. What we awkwardly call social science is a great growth of the day we live in: and the first place among its various achievements appears to be due to the organisation of teaching. We must rejoice that, long unduly depressed, this weighty avocation has now, at least as regards male teachers, and in principle if not in detail, found its level. And I congratulate the teacher upon this that, though his office is laborious, yet, in Scotland at least, he works upon a willing subject. And, if he is strong enough to have some energies yet left available, after his heavy duties of routine have been discharged, he is happy in his opportunities of knowledge and experience, for he is always in contact with human nature, and the human mind.

This brings me, Gentlemen, to a single remark which, parting from the subject of professions, I will offer upon studies. I will offer it in the generally perilous form of a general proposition. I submit to

you, Gentlemen, that man is the crown of the visible creation, and that studies upon man, studies, in the largest sense of humanity, studies conversant with his nature, his works, his duties, and his destinies, are the highest studies. That, as the human form is the groundwork of the highest training in art, even so those mental pursuits are the highest, which have man, considered at large, for their object.

There is one among the pursuits of what I have termed humanity, upon which before I close I would particularly remark, because it is a branch which is only now beginning, in England, to assume its proper place in education and in letters, and as to which I am under the impression that Scotland also may have been backward notwithstanding its loyal care for the records of its olden time.

Excuse me then, Gentlemen, if I return, for a few moments, to the subject of historical studies; studies, not in the history of our own country only, but at large. These studies do not, it is true, directly subserve the purposes of any particular profession. To be a good historian does not make a man a good lawyer, or a good physician, or a good divine. They must, therefore, when they are put upon their trial, or when the question lies between them and some other study, be judged, not according to their immediate effect in enlarging the apparatus of professional knowledge, but by their immediate effect upon the man himself in his general aptitudes; and by their



mediate effect, through these, upon his professional competency. They can only, then, be recommended, Gentlemen, subject to conditions. The law of necessity, the limitation of time, may not allow us to widen our course of application so far as to include them. Again, they can only be recommended in the sense of a large, not of a narrow utility. But, in so far as a happy lot may give you liberty of choice, I would urge and entreat you, Gentlemen, to give a place, and that no mean place, in the scheme of your pursuits, to the study of human history.

The several kinds of knowledge need to be balanced one with another, somewhat as the several limbs of the body need a proportioned exercise in order to secure a healthy and equable development. The knowledge of the heavenly bodies, the knowledge of the planet on which we live, of the qualities of its material elements, and of all its living orders, valuable, nay, invaluable, as it may be shown to be, is nevertheless knowledge surely inferior in rank to the knowledge of the one living order that beyond measure transcends all the rest, and that has for one of its most distinctive characteristics this, that it possesses a history.

This history is among the most potent and effective of all the instruments of human education. It introduces us to forms of thought and action, which are infinitely diversified. It gives us far larger materials of judgment upon human conduct and upon the very springs of action, than any present

experience can confer. Allow me to observe to you, Gentlemen, that judgment upon human conduct is perhaps the most arduous among all the tasks, to which the mind of man can be addressed. It is a work, the perfect performance of which I apprehend surpasses all our powers. [Judgments must indeed incessantly be formed, and also pronounced, in the course of our lives. But they are formed for necessary practical purposes, and are all provisional, never absolute, never final.]\* To some it may sound like a paradox, but I believe it to be the simple truth, that no man and no combination of men is capable of weighing action in the scales of absolute justice, any more than the greatest artists, that ever lived in Greece, were competent to express absolute Beauty, by the force of their imaginations, and the labour of their hands. But as, in the case of the artist, the constant effort to reach an unattainable perfection availed to produce approximations at least to ideal excellence, so, in the case of the historian, the steady and loyal endeavour to be absolutely just and true in the lofty task of passing judgment, will keep the head steady and the foot sure in many a dangerous path by bog and precipice, and will give mighty aid in raising the mind of man to its best capacity for the noblest of all its operations in all their branches, the search and discernment of the Truth.

\* This passage has been added to the Address since its delivery.

But there is one peculiar note of the consummate historic student, nay the historic reader, which deserves beyond all others to be pressed upon your attention, and in which he partakes of the highest quality of the historian himself. Let us ask ourselves what is that highest quality? Of him who betakes himself to the writing of history, to the telling us what man and the world have been in other times, much indeed is required. He must for example be learned, upright, exact, methodical, and clear. This is much; but it is not enough. The question remains behind, by what standard is the child of the present to try the children of the past? Our mental habits are shaped according to the age in which we live, our thought is saturated with its colour. But, in like manner, those who went before us, in the long procession of our race took the form and pressure of their times respectively. Therefore they must not be judged according to the form and pressure of ours. Those, who in other days denounced death against idolaters, or those who inflicted it upon heretics, must not be sentenced, without taking into view the difference in mental habits produced by two opposed religious atmospheres, the one, in which dogma was never questioned, the other in which doubt, denial, and diverse apprehension so prevail, as greatly to bewilder and unsettle the ordinary mind. Charles the First must not be tried by the rules of a constitutional monarchy, now so familiar to our thoughts and language. Queen Elisabeth,

working under the terrible conditions of her epoch and her position, must not be judged by the standards which will be applicable to Queen Victoria. The great Popes of the middle age, especially the greatest of them all, Gregory the Seventh and Innocent the Third, must not be denounced as aggressors upon civil authority, without bearing in mind that, in those days, the guardians of law and social right did oftentimes set the most glaring examples of violence, lawlessness, and fraud. The historian, and in his measure, the reader of the historian, must therefore lift himself out of what is now called his environment, and, by effort of mind, assume the point of view, and think under the entire conditions, which belonged to the person or the race he is calling to account. In so far as he fails to do this, he perverts judgment, by taking his seat on the tribunal, loaded with irrelevant and with misleading matter. But, in so far as he succeeds, he not only discharges a duty of equity; he moreover acquires by degrees a suppleness and elasticity of mental discernment, which enable him to disengage from a controversy all its dregs; to separate, even in complicated subject matter, between the wine and the lees, between the grain and the chaff, between the relevant matter in a disputation, which, when once ascertained and set in order, leads up to a right judgment, and the by-paths of prejudice ignorance and passion which lead away from it. The historical mind is the judicial mind in the exactness of its

balance; it is the philosophic mind in the comprehensiveness and refinement of its view.

Nor is there any toiler in the whole field of thought, who more than the historian requires to eschew what is known in trade as 'scamping' his work. He must, if only for his own sake, and to give himself a chance of holding a place in the kindly memory of men, bestow upon it that ample expenditure of labour, of which Macaulay, independently of all his other brilliant gifts, has given to this age a superlative and rare example. In him we have an illustration of a vital truth; in mental work, the substance and the form are so allied that they cannot be severed. The form is the vehicle, through which the work of the substance is to be done: if the point of the arrow be too blunt to penetrate, the strength of the arm is vain; and every student, in whatever branch, should carry with him the recollection of the well-known saying of Dr. Johnson, who, when he was asked how he had attained to his extraordinary excellence in conversation, replied that, whatever he had to say, he had constantly taken pains to say it in the best manner that he could.

Yet once more, Gentlemen. In a recent Lecture on Galileo, Professor Jack has said, with great truth and force, 'that greatness is scarcely compatible with a narrow concentration of intellect even to one family of subjects.'\* I remember when the late

Sir James Simpson, conversing with me on some extremely small human skulls, which had then recently been uncovered in the Orkneys, and which had been treated as belonging to some pre-Celtic and inferior race, observed that exclusive devotion to one pursuit and few ideas is known to give very contracted skulls. It is difficult, perhaps, for those, to whom one pursuit, and one set of subjects, are to be their daily bread, to know how far they may with safety indulge in collateral studies. But there can hardly be a doubt as to the benefit of these, if they can be had. An absolute singleness of pursuit almost means a mind always in one attitude; an eye that regards every object, however many-sided, from one point of view; an intellectual dietary beginning and ending with one article. Good sense and modesty obviate a multitude of mischiefs: but the exclusiveness, of which I now speak, is in itself prone to serious evils. It loses the benefit of the side-lights, which the kingdoms of knowledge cast upon one another. It disposes each man to exaggerate the force and value of his own particular attainment, and perhaps therewith his own importance. It engenders narrowness and rigidity of mental habit. It deprives the mind of the refreshment, which is healthfully afforded by alternation of labour; and of the strength, as well as the activity, to be gained by allowing varied subjects to evoke and put in exercise its wonderfully varied powers.

So much Gentlemen for your future callings, and

for your actual studies. As to the temper, in which you should set about them, you have little need of exhortation; and my closing words under this head shall be few. Be assured that every one of you has his place and vocation on this earth; and that it rests with himself to find it. Do not believe those who too lightly say, nothing succeeds like success: effort, Gentlemen, honest, manful, humble effort succeeds, by its reflected action upon character, especially in youth, better than success. Which, indeed, too easily and too early gained, not seldom serves like winning the first throw of the dice, to blind and stupefy. Get knowledge all you can: and the more you get, the more you breathe upon its nearer heights their invigorating air, and enjoy the widening view, the more you will know and feel, how small is the elevation you have reached, in comparison with the immeasurable altitudes, that yet remain unscaled. Be thorough in all you do: and remember that, though ignorance often may be innocent, pretension is always despicable. Quit you like men, be strong: and the exercise of your strength to-day will give you more strength to-morrow. Work onwards, and work upwards; and may the blessing of the Most High sooth your cares, clear your vision, and crown your labours with reward.

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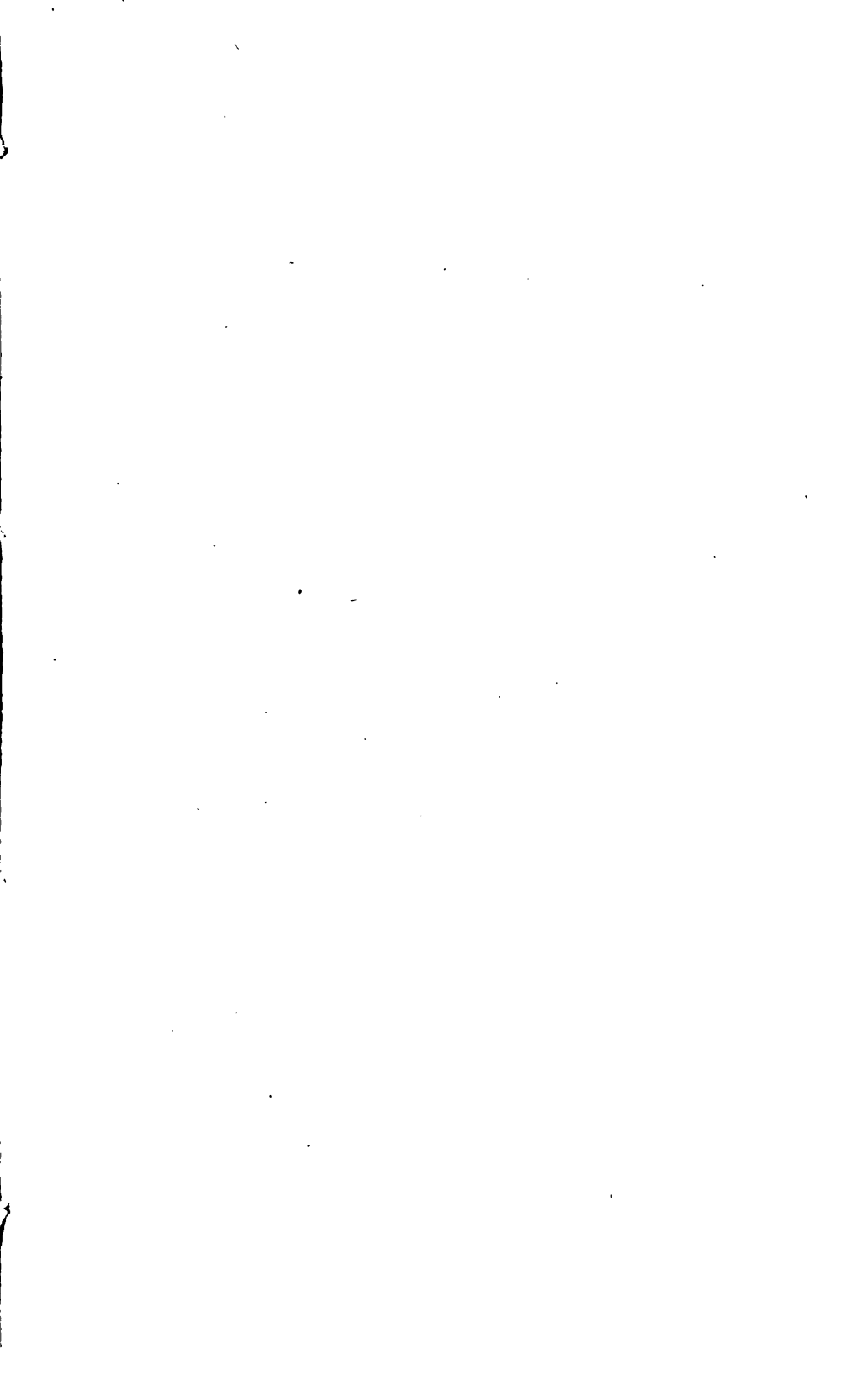
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